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William Pinkney's Mission to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, 1816

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BY

HOWARD R. MARRARO

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WILLIAM PINKNEY'S MISSION TO THE KINGDOM OF THE TWO SICILIES, 1816

By Howard R. Marraro

THE STORY of the diplomatic mission of William Pinkney,[1] a native of Annapolis, Maryland, to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1816, was of far-reaching importance not only because it marked the first official diplomatic contact ever established between the United States and any of the states of the Italian peninsula,[2] but also because the indemnity claims, which gave rise

[1] For biographies on Pinkney, see: Rev. William Pinkney, *The Life of William Pinkney*, by his Nephew. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1853); Henry Wheaton, *Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Speeches of William Pinkney.* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1826); Henry Wheaton, "Life of William Pinkney," in *Lives of William Pinkney, William Ellery, and Cotton Mather* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1844), 1-84; *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 626-629; Horace Henry Hagan, *Eight Great American Lawyers* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Co., 1923).

[2] It is true that Ralph Izard in 1777 was appointed by Congress Commissioner to Tuscany, but since he never reached his post, his cannot be considered as a

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to the appointment of Mr. Pinkney, were generally regarded as affecting our national prosperity, character, and honor. Indeed, the story of these relations was so important that it arrested the attention of three federal administrations and held the interest of the American people for more than two decades.[3] In his *Thirty Years' View*,[4] Senator Thomas H. Benton (Missouri), a keen and shrewd observer of his times, wrote "that the indemnity obtained from Naples . . . may be looked upon as the most remarkable of Jackson's diplomatic successes." In fact, it was not until 1832 when John Nelson returned to America from Naples that agreement was reached.

The controversy between the United States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies which resulted in the appointment of Mr. Pinkney, went back to the year 1809, when Napoleon I appointed his brother-in-law, Prince Joachim Murat (1767-1815) to the throne of the Two Sicilies. During the Napoleonic wars, Murat distinguished himself as an able cavalry leader. In 1800, he married Caroline, the youngest sister of Napoleon. In 1808, Napoleon appointed him to the throne of Naples, and although he bestowed upon himself the title of Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies, which he held until 1815, his sovereignty never extended to the island of Sicily proper. After the fall of Napoleon, Murat lost his throne, was courtmartialed, and shot at Pizzo, in Calabria, on October 13, 1815.

But let us go back to the origin of the indemnity claims. On July 1, 1809, the minister of foreign affairs of Naples addressed to Mr. Frederick Degan, the United States consul there, an official invitation to all American vessels, provided with proper papers

diplomatic mission. Nor can Philip Mazzei's fruitless mission to the Grand Duke of Tuscany during the Revolution (1779-1783) be viewed as having a diplomatic character. In fact, until Pinkney's appointment, the United States had been represented in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies by a consul in Naples (1796), Palermo (1805) and Messina (1805). See "Personal Records of the Department of State."

[3] The convention to terminate the reclamations of the United States Government was not concluded until October 14, 1832, under Jackson's administration. For the text of this treaty and a brief account of its background, see Hunter Miller, *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933), IV, 711-721. An account of the claims, their origin, negotiations, and settlement will be found in John Bassett Moore, *History and Digest of the International Arbitrations to Which the United States Has Been a Party.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), V, 4575-4589.

[4] New York: 1854, I, 604.

and certificates of origin, to repair to the Neopolitan ports.[5] Such vessels accordingly entered the port. Shortly afterwards, however, to carry out Napoleon's wishes, Murat promulgated decrees which enabled him to seize and confiscate the American vessels that ventured into Neapolitan waters; sell their cargoes for the benefit of the government; and take some of the vessels into the public service. These ships remained in that service and were still in it at the time that the legitimate ruler, King Ferdinand I, who had been restored by the Congress of Vienna as the King of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, was washing his hands of all participation in the plunder of the usurper Murat.

At the close of the second war with Great Britain, the United States Government demanded reparation and indemnity for the losses American merchants had sustained by the illegal seizure and confiscation of property. Accordingly, on February 28, 1816, Mr. Pinkney, who was generally regarded as a leading statesman and diplomatist of his day, was nominated by President Madison as Minister to Russia, "with a special mission to the King of the Two Sicilies.[6] The nomination of Mr. Pinkney as Minister to Russia was confirmed on March 7, but it was rejected in respect to the special mission to the King of the Two Sicilies.[7] Nevertheless, on April 17, Mr. Pinkney was again nominated by the following presidential message:

> It being presumed that further information may have changed the views of the Senate, relative to the importance and expediency of a mission to Naples, for the purpose of negotiating indemnities to our citizens for spoliations committed by the Neapolitan government, I nominate William Pinkney, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia, to be Minister Plenipotentiary to Naples, especially charged with that trust.[8]

The nomination of Mr. Pinkney was duly confirmed by the

[5] In his letter to Frederick Degan, the United States Consul in Naples, the Duke of Gallo, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated that it was "the intention of His Majesty, as a general measure, freely to admit American vessels coming directly into his ports, provided they had regular papers and had not by paying duty to Great Britain, or by submitting to be searched by English cruisers, brought themselves within the decrees of December 21, 1806, and January 9, 1808." Degan ceased to be Consul the same year. Alexander Hammett was appointed in December to succeed him. For a good account of the entire controversy, see the Rev. Christopher Perrotta, *The Claims of the United States against the Kingdom of Naples.* (Washington, D. C.: Belvedere Press, 1926).

[6] *Executive Journal,* III, 32.

[7] *Ibid.*, 35.

[8] *Ibid.*, 45, April 20.

Senate on April 23, 1816, by a vote of eighteen to fifteen,[9] and he was commissioned on the same day.[10] Three days later, on April 26, 1816, in a communication to the King of the Two Sicilies, whom he addressed as "Great and Good Friend," President Madison stated that in order to confirm between the two countries "perfect harmony and a good correspondence and to remove all grounds of dissatisfaction by a friendly discussion," he had appointed, with the advice and consent of the Senate, Mr. Pinkney to be "special minister to your Majesty on subjects of high importance to both nations." [11]

In his instructions to Mr. Pinkney, dated May 11, 1816, Secretary of State James Monroe reviewed briefly the nature of the controversy with the Neapolitan Government and urged Mr. Pinkney to manifest a spirit of conciliation towards the Government of Naples, adding: "The President [Mr. Madison] desires . . . that you will use every effort in your power to terminate the business with Naples as soon as it may be possible, and that you will proceed thence, immediately afterwards, to St. Petersburg." [12]

The motives which induced Mr. Pinkney to accept this double mission are revealed in a conversation he had with one of his friends to whom he is reported to have said: "There are those among my friends, who wonder that I will go abroad, however honorable the service. They know not how I toil at the bar; they know not all my anxious days and sleepless nights; I must breathe awhile; the bow for ever bent will break. . . ." "Besides," he added, "I want to see Italy; the orators of Britain I have heard; but I want to visit the classic land, the study of whose poetry and eloquence is the charm of my life; I shall set my foot on its shores with feelings that I cannot describe, and return with new enthusiasm, I hope with new advantages, to the habits of public speaking." [13]

Mr. Pinkney embarked, for the purpose of proceeding to his foreign missions, on board the *Washington*, a ship of the line, attached to the United States Mediterranean Squadron. The

[9] *Ibid.*, 46.
[10] Hunter Miller (editor), *Treaties*, III, 716-717.
[11] General Records of the Department of State. Record Group No. 59. Credences, Volume 1 (Oct. 9, 1789-Nov. 16, 1824). National Archives, Washington, D. C.
[12] Ms, National Archives. See below for the full text of this instruction.
[13] Wheaton, *Life*, 57.

vessel cast anchor in the Bay of Naples on July 13, and was immediately ordered into quarantine because it had touched at Gibraltar. Though he appealed to the Neapolitan Government to have the period of the quarantine shortened, Mr. Pinkney was informed that however much it was regretted by the Government, a quarantine of thirteen or fourteen days was indispensable. And, in fact, Mr. Pinkney and his company were not permitted to land until July 26. On the following day, he informed the Marquis di Circello, the Neapolitan Minister of Foreign Affairs,[14] by official note, of his arrival and character. The Marquis, in his reply, appointed July 31, for Mr. Pinkney's first interview with him.[15]

During the following two weeks, Mr. Pinkney and his wife were received by His Majesty the King. Together with Mrs. Pinkney and the members of his staff, he attended court, in his official capacity, to celebrate the birthday of His Royal Highness, the hereditary Prince of the Two Sicilies. In a despatch, dated August 24, 1816, to Secretary of State Monroe, Mr. Pinkney stated that he had been very kindly and respectfully received by the Neapolitan Government, adding that he had seen the Marquis di Circello serveral times and the King twice. He admitted, however, that he could not yet say positively what action would be taken on the spoliation matter.[16] In another despatch to Secretary of State Monroe, dated August 29, 1816, Mr. Pinkney wrote that his reception by the Neapolitan Government had been " extremely friendly, and in the highest degree respectful to the Government of the United States." [17]

In his first interview with the Marquis the conversation was conducted in French, because, although the Neapolitan had been for several years minister at London, he could, to Mr. Pinkney's surprise, neither speak nor understand a word of English. The conversation was therefore conducted in French which the Neapolitan spoke better than Mr. Pinkney. With some naivété, Mr. Pinkney noted that in this language " amidst a good deal of well-managed discourse on his part which rather related to me than

[14] Tommaso di Somma, Marquis di Circello (1737-1826). One of the most outstanding men in the Kingdom. In 1805 he was Neapolitan minister of foreign affairs and in 1821 he became President of the Provisional Government of Naples. From June 4, 1805, to June 10, 1822, he was minister of foreign affairs.

[15] Wheaton, *Life*, 152.

[16] MS, National Archives.

[17] MS, National Archives. See below for the full text of this despatch.

my mission, he [Marquis di Circello] made several observations which had a bearing upon my principal errand." The Neapolitan laid particular emphasis on the poverty of their public treasury, and "the rapacity of Mons. Murat." For a period of about two weeks, from July 31 to August 11, nothing further was done. On the last-named day, Mr. Pinkney, again visited the Marquis di Circello, reminding him of the principal object of his mission. To Mr. Pinkney's surprise, the Marquis professed not to understand to what he referred as the principal object of his mission; but when Mr. Pinkney mentioned the spoliations by Murat, he seemed suddenly to remember that he had at least talked to him of them before. Thereupon Mr. Pinkney informed the Marquis that he intended to present a written note on the subject. This course, the Marquis replied, would be acceptable to the Neapolitan Government.[18]

In fact, on August 24, 1816, Mr. Pinkney sent his official memorandum to the Marquis, containing a detailed and clear exposition of the indemnity claims and stressing the responsibility of a nation for wrongs committed and obligations incurred by its then present rulers upon a subsequent revolution in the government which stamped those rulers as usurpers in the view of their successors. Mr. Pinkney's argument though temperate and respectful was perfectly conclusive. It left no ground for cavil; no possibility for dispute. It was considered by some critics as one of the most lucid and masterly expositions of the subject in controversy that had ever been issued by an American representative abroad.[19]

It must be pointed out, in this connection, that Mr. Pinkney knew that his presence in the Kingdom had caused great conster-

[18] *North American Review*, Boston, XXI (Oct. 1825), 273-274.

[19] Wheaton, *Some Account*, 150. MS, National Archives. The full text of Mr. Pinkney's letter to the Marquis di Circello, dated August 24, 1816, has been published in several places, e. g., the pamphlet entitled *Message* (pp. 10-16) (footnote 33 *infra*), and in Pinkney's *Life*, 277-287. When it became known in England that Mr. Pinkney had submitted his official note to the Neapolitan Government, the *British Annual Register*, London, LVIII (1817), 132, reported that the presence of the American Squadron which "had the appearance of intimidation, excited great alarm in Naples, almost all of the ships of the royal navy having been disarmed . . . the Marquis di Circello, Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered a note to each of the foreign ministers relative to the American claims, and couriers were sent to engage the protection of different courts." *Niles' Register* (II, 138-140) added that the Neapolitan Government manned batteries with heavy cannon, that 12,000 Austrian troops were placed on guard in the Castle and that Naples counted on the English fleet to cool the ardor of the American seamen. (*American Register*, 1818, 123). See Perrotta, *op. cit.*, 33-34.

nation and alarm in government circles. A panic all but seized the Neapolitan Court on his appearance. The poverty of the resources of the Neapolitan Government and the extent of the American claim agitated and embarrassed King Ferdinand and his advisers.[20] It was rumored that couriers had been hurriedly despatched by the Neapolitan Government to Vienna and to St. Petersburg to find out whether the emperors of Austria and Russia would back King Ferdinand in his refusal to pay the American claims. Meanwhile, under the inspiration of the Neapolitan Government, statements were published in various continental papers, suggesting that the American Government, being in want of a naval station and depot in the Mediterranean, would accept the island of Lampedosa as a full indemnity.

This statement was false. The truth is that informally Mr. Pinkney had advised the Marquis di Circello that Commodore Chauncey[21] had expressed the wish to have the privilege of a depot in the dockyard or public arsenal at Messina or Syracuse in Sicily for the use of the American Squadron. On August 28, 1816, the Marquis replied that it was impossible to grant such a request both because of the precedent it would set in favor of all the powers that had no establishment in the Mediterranean as well as because of the state of peace which existed between the Neapolitan Court and the Barbary Regencies. However, the Neapolitan Government, he added, would gladly grant "occasional facilities" that the American Commodore might request from time to time. Nevertheless, the Neapolitan newspapers, under orders of the Government, gave an entirely different construction to the American request. The following statement, for example, appeared in a Neapolitan paper on September 7:

> Mr. Pinkney has had several conferences with the foreign minister. The negotiations have assumed a character of moderation, which would soon bring them to an issue, if the English were not aggrieved by the arrangements. The Americans demand the island of Lampedosa. It is five leagues in circumference and two long; it is abundant in fruits and well wooded; it has a sure anchorage for a small fleet. But even suppose our court should cede it, it is to be considered that this isle is only twenty five

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[20] Pinkney, *Life*, 277-287.

[21] Commodore Isaac Chauncey (1772-1840), of Connecticut. In 1815 he took command of the *Washington* and with this vessel as his flagship he commanded the Mediterranean Squadron 1816-1818. *Dictionary of American Biography*, IV, 40.

leagues from Malta, and that the English will not probably choose to have the Americans, as neighbours, in the Mediterranean.[22]

Meanwhile, it was rumored that the imperial courts had signified their intention to support Naples in its refusal to pay the claims and that Mr. Pinkney had been instructed not to push the claims to any definite issue. After waiting more than a month, without receiving any reply, Mr. Pinkney, on September 30,[23] wrote a private note to the Marquis di Circello pressing for an answer to his memorial, on the ground that he was obliged to proceed to Russia, and reminded him that the season was advancing. In consequence, Mr. Pinkney obtained another interview with the Marquis, during the course of which he was informed that an immediate answer was really impossible, because it was necessary to collect the papers relative to the confiscations and ascertain the amount of the claims; and that this was obviously not a matter of a few weeks. Mr. Pinkney then told him that he should be obliged to leave Naples without the answer, as he was determined to set out for Russia within a week. However, on the evening of that same day, Mr. Pinkney received a note from the Marquis, antedated by two days, which was in the form of a reply to Mr. Pinkney's private letter of September 30. In this note, the Neapolitan studiously avoided any reference to their last interview but renewed the hint, " that he will make it his duty to forward his official reply where Mr. Pinkney may indicate." [24]

In his despatch, dated October 5, 1816,[25] to Secretary Monroe informing him of the course of the negotiations, Mr. Pinkney wrote:

> Avoiding extremes of every kind, I have sought to write and speak with politeness but, at the same time, explicitly and firmly. My object has been to let the King and his ministers understand that the claim *must* be settled, and to place it upon such a ground as to convince them that we are in earnest in considering them as our debtors. Without being studiously conciliatory, I have forborne all menace . . . I might have contrived to display a more active and zealous importunity than my letters will be

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[22] Commenting on this paragraph, an anonymous writer in the *North American Review*, XXI, (Oct. 1825), 277, felt that since it seemed probable that the United States would not get anything else from Naples, but that it might receive the island of Lampedosa, the subject was worthy of consideration.

[23] MS, National Archives. For full text, see *Message*, 22-23.

[24] *North American Review*, XXI, 274.

[25] Pinkney, *Life*, 152-154. MS, National Archives. See below for full text of this despatch.

found to describe; but it could only have been that teasing importunity which, wanting dignity and unauthorized by usage, has nothing to recommend its introduction into transactions like this. No proper opportunity has, I think, been missed to urge this government to a favorable decision. . . . The reasons suggested by this Government for a short postponement of its decision are such as I suppose I could not have quarrelled with, without putting myself in the wrong.—They are perfectly respectful to the United States, and of real weight in themselves. . . .

Mr. Pinkney's instructions did not allow him to wait indefinitely for an answer to his note. When it became obvious that no immediate reply could be expected, on October 1, 1816, Mr. Pinkney addressed a note to the Marquis di Circello requesting the usual passports and stating that he wished to " set out at the end of this week." [26] In fact, on October 3, Mr. Pinkney had his audience of leave and a few days later, departed for St. Petersburg, passing through Rome, Vienna, and Poland.

Before his departure, Mr. Pinkney, on October 7, 1816, addressed a letter to Mr. Monroe [27] in which he complained that his health had suffered in Naples.

The climate looks well enough [he wrote] (not better, however, than our own,) but it relaxes and enfeebles much more than ours. The so-much vaunted sky of Italy appears to me (thus far) to be infinitely inferior to that of Maryland. Everything here has been overrated by travellers, except the Bay of Naples, and the number and clamourous importunity of the common beggars, and the meanness of the beggars of a higher order, which it is absolutely impossible to overrate. After all, our country gains upon our affection in proportion as we have opportunities of comparing it with others.[28]

Mr. Pinkney had scarcely left Naples, when the Neapolitan Minister sent his official reply to the American's note of August 24. The Marquis di Circello's reply, dated October 15, only a few days after Mr. Pinkney had set out for St. Petersburg, was sent to the Duke of Serra Capriola, Neapolitan Minister at the Russian capital, who was instructed to deliver it to Mr. Pinkney. It is significant to note that the difficulties which, while Mr. Pinkney was present, threatened to retard that reply for many weeks and even months, quickly disappeared after his departure. In fact

[26] *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, IV, 167. MS, National Archives. The full text of this note was published in *Message*, 24.
[27] See below for full text of this despatch.
[28] Wheaton, *Some Account*, 154. MS, National Archives.

the reply passed Mr. Pinkney on his way to the Russian capital and arrived there long before him. Immediately upon his arrival at St. Petersburg, the Duke of Serra Capriola manifested a very anxious desire that Mr. Pinkney should receive it. In the words of Mr. Pinkney: " He even entreated me to do so, with such earnestness, as it was not easy to resist. I refused, however, to have anything to do with his packet, &c." But the Duke of Serra Capriola finally prevailed upon the American to receive the packet, for the purpose of transmitting it to Washington. This Mr. Pinkney agreed to do because he had " no difficulty in consenting to forward to the Secretary of State of the United States anything, which by order of your Court, you may think fit to address to him."

Meanwhile, a copy of the Marquis di Circello's reply to Mr. Pinkney was also forwarded to the Count of Castelcicala, Neapolitan Minister at Paris, with instructions to communicate it to Mr. Albert Gallatin, the United States Minister to France.[29] In his letter to the American Government, enclosing a copy of the document, Mr. Gallatin observed, with great justice, " that it may be presumed that the Neapolitan Government delayed that note, in order to prevent the possibility of a reply; and that their intention in communicating it to me was to hasten its transmission to you." [30] Simultaneously, the substance of the Neapolitan's note was published in the newspapers at St. Petersburg and Vienna, in such a manner as to lead Mr. Pinkney to affirm, in his correspondence with the Secretary of State, that the Neapolitan Government, or its minister at Vienna or St. Petersburg, had dictated the publication.[31]

In substance, in his reply, the Neapolitan Minister rested the refusal of his Court to grant the American claims on three grounds: —first, that Murat was an usurper and that the legitimate sovereign of Naples was at war with him, and consequently not at all bound to discharge his obligations; secondly, that the confiscations were not even the acts of the government of Murat, but were forced upon him, by the direct and violent interference of Napo-

[29] Albert Gallatin (1761-1849). Born in Geneva, emigrated to America, became a diplomat, writer, and Secretary of the Treasury in the administrations of Jefferson and Madison.

[30] *North American Review*, XXI, 275-276. Extracts of Mr. Gallatin's letter to Mr. Monroe, dated Paris, Nov. 19, 1816, were published in *Message*, 29-30. An English translation of the Count of Castelcicala's note, dated Paris, Nov. 15, 1816, to Mr. Pinkney, was also published in *Message*, 30.

[31] *North American Review*, XXI, 278.

leon; and thirdly, that the proceeds of the sales of the confiscated property went, not to the public treasury, but to the private chest of Murat to furnish the means of his profusion and extravagance.[32]

The objections raised by the Neapolitan Government in its refusal to pay the claims did not satisfy the American Government and people. In fact, Mr. Pinkney's failure to obtain the indemnity caused such great disappointment in government and private circles that on January 30, 1818, the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on the President for information on the subject. In consequence of this act, on February 28, 1818, Monroe, now Chief Executive, submitted a report from the Secretary of State, together with sundry papers relating to the claims.[33]

No immediate action was taken by the United States Government. However, on April 12, 1825, the Secretary of State, H. Clay, notified Mr. J. J. Appleton, of Massachusetts, who was, at the moment, Secretary to the British Legation, of his appointment as " commercial agent at Naples," and that the object was " to sound the Government of Naples as to the practicability of getting indemnity for our citizens for their numerous and large claims upon the government." [34]

Meanwhile, an anonymous writer in the *North American Review* [35] severely criticized Mr. Pinkney for his failure, suggesting that he [Mr. Pinkney] was no match for the wily Neapolitans and that he lacked the shrewdness to detect the treachery and duplicity of the Court of Naples. Arguing that the American claims were neither against Murat nor Ferdinand, but against Naples and the nation, the writer attempted to prove that it was not hard for Naples to refund the property. He recalled that some of the vessels confiscated were taken into the public service and were in the service of the restored king at the time that he disclaimed all participation in the plunder. The rest, with their cargoes, he wrote, were sold and went to furnish means, with

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting in Conformity to a Resolution of the House of Representatives of the 30th of January last, Sundry Papers, in Relation to the Claim of the Merchants of the United States, for Their Property Seized and Confiscated under the Authority of the King of Naples.* Read, and ordered to lie upon the table: March 2, 1818. House Doc. No. 130 (Washington: E. De Krafft, 1818).

[34] Instructions, United States Ministers, X (July 15, 1823-Dec. 30, 1825). National Archives, Washington, D. C.

[35] Vol. XXI, 269-299.

which the Neapolitan people received their favorite largess of *panem et circenses*; with which the streets and squares of Pompeii were uncovered; with which a new and spacious avenue was opened to Naples, with which an efficient police was maintained; with which bands of robbers, hitherto triumphant, were swept from the passes of Puglia and Calabria.[36]

It would seem that these charges against Mr. Pinkney remained unanswered until 1853, when his nephew, in his *The Life of William Pinkney*,[37] referring to these attacks against his relative, stated that Mr. Pinkney had been compelled to act upon the alleged reasons of the Government of Naples and upon the distinct and positive assurances of the Marquis. It would have been rude in the extreme, in the opinion of the Reverend Mr. Pinkney, to have called the candor and fair dealing of the Neapolitan Government in question upon mere suspicion. At the time that he was negotiating with the Marquis di Circello, the American minister did not know many things that came to light years later. On that basis, the writer concluded, Mr. Pinkney's failure to obtain satisfaction of the claims must be excused.

While Mr. Pinkney was still in Naples, an important incident occurred which deserves to be recorded here, because it helps to focus our attention on his character and also serves to illustrate the unusual diplomatic skill he displayed in dealing with an unpleasant international situation.

One day the Marquis di Circello informed Mr. Pinkney that a serious conflict had occurred between the crews of certain English and American vessels of war anchored in the port of Messina. The Neapolitan added that the Americans not only had used violence against the Englishmen but were also guilty of " atrocities and contemptuous conduct towards the sovereignty of the territorial authority, in defiance of the most cordial hospitality that friendship and good understanding required." The Marquis went so far as to wish that Americans avoid the ports of Sicily in the future. When he first heard of the incident, Mr. Pinkney, as he later informed Secretary Monroe,[38] presumed that the affair was of " no real importance," although it had moved the Neapolitans

[36] *Ibid.*, 292.
[37] p. 155.
[38] Letter dated Naples, Sept. 24, 1816. MS, National Archives.

a great deal, principally because, he felt certain, the English were parties to it and England, he added, was " of great weight at this feeble court." In subsequent discussions between Mr. Pinkney and the Marquis di Circello, the American did not disguise his dissatisfaction at the intimation of the Marquis, but since the American minister did not at the time have any details of the affair he thought it best to forbear comment upon it.

However, several days later, on October 6, 1816,[39] in reply to a communication (with enclosures) he had received from the Marquis di Circello, Mr. Pinkney notified the Neapolitan Foreign Minister that he was referring the subject to the United States Government, " whose respect for the peace and jurisdiction of friendly sovereigns is equal to its determination to exact the respect which is due to itself." He expressed great surprise at the impunity which that acknowledged outrage, " as disrespectful to the just authority of His Sicilian Majesty as it was insulting to the American flag, appeared to have enjoyed, and at the extraordinary oblivion into which . . . it seems to have passed," adding that the established reputation of Commodore Chauncey could not lead him to believe that he [the Commodore] could ever be forgetful of what he owed to any Sovereign, in amity with his government."

In a despatch to the Secretary of State, dated Naples, October 8, 1816,[40] Mr. Pinkney, in informing Mr. Monroe of the later developments in the case, admitted that the correspondence of the Marquis had provoked him, " for it is unjust in itself and indecently parcial to the English." Referring to the concluding words of his reply to the Marquis di Circello, Mr. Pinkney stated that they appeared to him to be indispensable, for, he added, " such people ought not to be suffered to suppose that we will condescend to accept any hospitality from them if it be not such as it ought to be." Mr. Pinkney left Naples shortly after dispatching this letter to the Secretary of State and here the affair seems to have ended. Nevertheless, the manner in which Mr. Pinkney conducted himself in his conversations and correspondence with the Marquis di Circello proved his determination to defend the rights of American citizens even under the most difficult conditions.

[39] MS, National Archives.
[40] MS, National Archives.

A word about the documents published as an appendix to this article. Pinkney's note dated August 24, 1816, to the Marquis di Circello, making formal request for the American claims, and the formal reply of the Marquis di Circello, dated October 15, 1816, are too long to be included in this collection. However, the full texts of both documents may be found in the President's *Message*. Of the following seven documents bearing on Mr. Pinkney's mission to Naples four (dated August 29, September 30, October 9, November 3) have never been published heretofore, and of the other three (dated May 11, August 29, October 5) only brief extracts were published in the President's *Message*. The documents below are arranged in chronological order.

James Monroe to Pinkney

Department of State, May 11, 1816.[41]

Sir

Being appointed with [sic] the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Emperor of Russia, and in a similar trust, to the King of Naples, the duties of the latter mission which is special, will engage your attention, in the first instance. The Washington, a Ship of the Line, is ordered into the Chesapeake, to receive on board, and to convey you and your family to Naples. You will be furnished with the usual Commission and Letter of Credence to the King.

The principal object of your mission to Naples, is, to obtain indemnity, for the losses which our citizens sustained by the illegal seizure and confiscation of their property by the Neapolitan government. You will be furnished with such evidence in support of the claim, as is in possession of this Department, and as notice has been given to the Collectors in the principal cities of your appointment and its object, that it might be communicated to the parties interested, it is expected that you will receive much further light on the subject directly from them.

The President does not entertain a doubt of the right, of the United States, to a full indemnity for these losses. They were inflicted by the then government of the country without the slightest cause. The commerce of the United States was invited into the Neapolitan ports, by special Decrees, with the promise of protection and encouragement, on the faith of which, many ships having entered, with valuable cargoes, the whole amount was seized, by the Government itself, and converted to public use. For this very extraordinary and unlawful act, no plea has been urged, that we have heard of, except that of necessity, which is no argument against indemnity.

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[41] Extracts from this letter were published in *Message*, 7-8. Except for minor changes in capitalization and punctuation the text of the extracts is the same as that given here.

The injury being inflicted by a government in full possession of the sovereignty of the country, exercising all its powers, recognized by the Nation, and by Foreign Powers by Treaties and other formal acts, of the highest authority, it is not perceived on what ground, an indemnity can be refused. No principle is better established, than that the nation is responsible, for the acts of its government, and that a change in the authority does not affect the obligation. In the disordered state of that country for several years past, it has been thought useless, to press this claim, but now that affairs appear to be better settled, it would be improper, longer, to delay it. The President indulges a strong hope that reparation will now be made. In the discharge of this trust, in the manner of the negotiation, and in the provision for the debt, should such be made you will manifest a spirit of conciliation towards the government of Naples. Any reasonable accommodation, as to the time and mode of payment, which may be desired, will be cheerfully allowed.

As you will be well acquainted with the nature of these claims, and the right of the United States to an indemnity; with the principles on which it is founded, and the arguments and facts which support it; it is unnecessary for me, to enter further, into the subject. The President has full confidence that nothing will be wanting on your part, to secure success to the mission. Satisfied that you will discharge its duties with equal ability and discretion it is thought improper, by too much precision, to impose any restraint on your judgment, either as to the manner, or the argument, to be used, in the negotiation.

Other objects will claim your attention in this mission. It is important to place the commerce of the two Nations, on a footing of reciprocal advantage. You are acquainted with the laws of the United States, regulating their commerce with other Powers, by which, that of Naples, enjoys the advantage, of nations, the most favored, with whom there is no Treaty. By explaining these Laws to the Government of Naples, you may be able to promote, corresponding regulations, in favor of our trade, there. It is desirable to form a Treaty of Commerce for the enlargement and protection of this trade, and altho' the nature of your mission, and the duties you will have to perform elsewhere, forbid, such a delay at Naples, as would be required, for that purpose, it may be in your power, to acquire information, as to the importance of the object, and the practicability of attaining it, which may be very useful. You will therefore make this an object of your attention, and communicate the result of your enquiries, to this Department.

The relations between the United States and the Powers bordering on the Mediterranean are becoming dayly [sic] more interesting. Our trade, with the dominions, of the Powers of Europe, in that quarter, is already important, and it is extending to those of Turkey, in Europe and Asia, and of Russia, on the Black Sea. For the protection of this trade, against the Barbary Powers, the United States have been compelled, to send a strong naval force, into the Mediterranean, which, it is probable, from present appearances, they will find it, equally necessary, to maintain there, for some time. A liberty to resort to the ports of the King of Naples, with

a security for amicable treatment, in them, is very desierable [sic]. The favorable influence which our Squadron, while in the Mediterranean, will have on the trade of the Italian States, in regard to the Barbary Powers, will be, a sufficient inducement, it is presumed, to any of them, to offer this asylum to our ships of war, with hospitality and kindness. You will endeavour to obtain the sanction, of the Neapolitan Government, to this accommodation, without, however, pledging any protection in return, on the part of our squadron, to the commerce of Naples. A letter to the Minister, with his answer to this effect, will be sufficient.

You will have a favorable opportunity at Naples to acquire much information, of the state and prospect of our commerce, with the Italian States and the Levant, and of the disposition of the several powers, including Turkey to encourage it. All the information which you can acquire on this subject will be useful.

Your mission to Naples being special, its object limited, and being likewise anticipated by the Neapolitan government, it is expected, that it may be concluded, in a few interviews. It is very important that the United States should be represented at S^{t}. Petersburg, by a Minister of the highest grade, employed by them, without any delay, which can be avoided. The President desires therefore, that you will use every effort in your power, to terminate the business with Naples, as soon as it may be possible, and that you will proceed thence, immediately afterwards, to S^{t} Peterburg.

I have the honor to be &c.

JAMES MONROE

PINKNEY TO JAMES MONROE

Naples. August. 29th 1816 [42]

Sir

The Washington cast anchor in the Bay of Naples on the 13th of last month, and was immediately ordered into Quarantine because she had touched at Gibraltar.—Although I was aware that the appearance of the Plague in Calabria and elsewhere had excited such alarm in the Mediterranean as that a public Ship, conveying one of the Princesses of the Neapolitan royal Family, had been subjected to Quarantine at Naples, and anthor public Ship, conveying the present Duchess of Berri from Naples to the South of France, had been subjected to Quarantine at Marseilles, I though it advisable to make known without Delay to the Minister for foreign affairs [the Marquis di Circello] by an informal Note my public character, and at the same time to invite him to use his authority to shorten our Quarantine as far as might be found consistent with Prudence. A copy of his reply to that Communication (and to another informal Note,

[42] This despatch was received by the State Department Jan. 4, 1817. Only brief extracts were published in *Message*, 8-10. There are many changes in capitalization and punctuation in the text there published.

in which I transmitted two Letters received for him by the Legation from the Neapolitan Consul at Gibraltar) is enclosed.—This reply was accompanied by some verbal explanations through a Gentleman at Naples; and the result of the whole was that, however it might be regretted by the Government, a Quarantine of thirteen or fourteen Days was indispensable.

In the Course of the 26th, our quarantine being at an End, I came on Shore.—The necessary orders were given by the proper Department for the landing, without Inspection, of the Baggage of all who were attached to the Legation; and every Disposition was shown to treat the Mission with the utmost Civility.—

On Saturday the 27th I prepared an official Note to the Marquis di Circello, announcing my Quality of Envoy Extraordinary to The King; but, as I wished that it should be delivered by the American Consul with a view to an Enquiry as to some matters of Ceremony, it did not come to the Hands of the Marquis until the Morning of Monday the 29th;—His answer, appointing Wednesday the 31st for our Interview, was sent immediately. You will find enclosed a Copy of each of these Notes.

My reception on the 31st was extremely friendly, and in the highest Degree respectful to the Government of The United States.—The regular purpose of my Visit was to show my credentials, furnish a Copy, and arrange the customary audience.—I did not therefore suppose that it presented a suitable opportunity for introducing a very detailed Explanation of the objects of my Mission; but, in Conformity with a desire expressed by the Marquis himself, I stated them to him as fully as was necessary to enable him to communicate them to the King.—With regard to my audience (for which I was not yet prepared with the Dress which Usage requires) he referred it to myself to request it by a Note whenever it should be convenient to me.

Although the Marquis di Circello was (as you know) for several years the Minister of this Court in London, he does not speak a word of English, and does not understand it when it is spoken by others.—Our conversation was therefore in French, which he speaks much better than I do.—Amidst a good deal of well managed Discourse on his part which rather related to me than to my Mission, he made several observations which had a bearing upon my principal Errand.—He spoke of the poverty of their public Treasury in Terms somewhat more strong than I expected, of the unprincipled manner in which Monsr Murat (as he styled him) appropriated to his own use whatever of value he could lay his Hands upon and, in particular, the Vessels and merchandize belonging to our Citizens, of the prodigality with which he dried up all the usual Resources of the Country and dissipated moreover all the Means which Rapacity afforded.—He drew no very precise Conclusion from those & similar remarks, although I took such notice of them as their Tendency prescribed; but upon the whole it was evident that the Claim which I was charged to make in behalf of our Merchants was not likely to be very readily admitted, and that I should only waste my Time by talking over its merits from day to day with a Minister who could of himself decide nothing, and whose Report, of my

Statements & Arguments, to those who must make or greatly * [43] influence the final Decision, would not be the most advantageous Channel by which they might be communicated.—In Consequence, before the interview was closed, I determined to propose the Claim as soon as possible in an official Note, and in the meantime to forbear to urge it in conversation, with any other view than to obtain from the Marquis di Circello such intimations as might be useful to me in the preparation of my Paper.—

On the 3[d] of the present month, I wrote to the Marquis, as I had promised, respecting my Audience, which took place on Wednesday the 8th, at a palace of the King at Capodimonti [sic] on the Edge of Naples. —In the short speech which on this occasion I made to the King in French (for he too appears not to understand English) I confined myself to the customary general Expressions.—His reply was very courteous, and his whole Deportment and Conversation were then (and have been since) of the same complexion. After my audience I presented Mr. King, the Secretary of Legation, together with my Son Charles, and the three other American Gentlemen who are with me; and they were received with great politeness.

On Sunday the 11[th], I had another Interview with the Marquis di Circello, to which Mr. King accompained me.—The main Object of it was to ascertain, according to my Instructions, the Inclinations of this Government as to commercial arrangements.—In reply to the suggestions, by which I thought it proper to lead to a Conversation on that Subject, the Marquis observed that he could not at that moment say anything definite upon it; that if I would mention to him specifically, then or at some future Interview, my own Ideas of the Nature & Conditions of such a Treaty as the Government of the United States would probably desire, he would willingly receive the Statement as informal and consult the King upon it; that he ought however in Candour to inform me that in the present unsettled Situation of Europe he did not believe it would be agreeable to the King to conclude a commercial Convention with any Power; that he

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* The Minister of Finance (The Chevalier di Medici) is understood to be the ablest man in the Government.

[43] Luigi de' Medici, Prince of Ottaviano and Duke of Sarno (1759-1830). Chevalier and statesman. Involved in the Jacobin plots, he was arrested on Feb. 27, 1795. He was President of the Royal Finances (July 1803). He was also Director of the State Secretaryship (April 1804). In 1806 he followed the Bourbons in Sicily. He got into difficulties with the Sicilian Parliament as a result of which William Cavendish Bentinck (1774-1839), the English agent in Sicily, who had instituted a liberal government, forced the King to exile him. In 1814 he participated in the Congress of Vienna. After the restoration of the Bourbon King, de' Medici became minister of finance, and after Aug. 16, 1823, he was *interim* president of the Council of Ministers and minister of foreign affairs. In 1827, he succeeded in forcing the Austrians to leave the Kingdom, but he was disgusted with Metternich and to prove that he was powerful, he used severe measures to quell the uprising in Cilento in 1828. See: Luigi Blanch, "Luigi de' Medici come uomo di stato e amministratore," in *Archivio Storico Napoletano* (Naples, 1925), 101-197; A. Simioni, *Le origini del risorgimento politico dell' Italia meridionale* (Messina, Principato, 1921), I, 414 ff; II, 188 ff; Piero Pieri, *Il regno di Napoli dal 1799 al 1806* (Naples, 1928).

thought it not improbable that hereafter and by Degrees, they might be so circumstanced as to find it practicable to make such a Convention with the United States; and that at any rate it would give him pleasure to receive from me any thing which looked to that Event.—I closed the Conversation on this Head by telling the Marquis [sic] that I should perhaps take another opportunity for further Explanation with regard to it.

I then adverted to the " principal object of my Mission," and intimated that I should very soon send him a Note upon it.—To my Surprize he professed not to understand to what I alluded as the *principal object of my Mission*; but, when I mentioned the Spoliations by Murat, he seemed suddenly to remember that I had at least talked to him of them before, and immediately, without giving me Time to proceed, remarked that he would relate to me frankly all that the present Government had been able to discover respecting them.—He said that Murat's conduct in that affair appeared to be so bad that nothing could be worse and that it amounted to a downright Robbery; that it appeared that the proceeds of the Sales had been ordered by Murat into the public Treasury, but that in a few months he took them out again, and they knew not what he had done with them.—To all this I thought it sufficient to answer that, whatever might have become of these proceeds, I hoped the King would cause our merchants to be indemnified for the Loss of them; but that I had no Desire at this interview to do more than inform the Marquis di Circello that I believed it would be as well to present the whole of that Subject to him without Delay in a note to which I flattered myself I should have such a Reply in writing as would be satisfactory to my Government.—Without either admitting or denying the responsibility of his Government, he said that such a Course would be acceptable to him and proper in itself, and that his answer should not be unnecessarily postponed.—His manner, while this Topick [sic] was under Notice, was kind and even good humoured, although he could not and perhaps did not wish to disguise that it was by no means a pleasant one.—

Before I left him I mentioned to him (informally) a wish, which had been suggested to me by Commodore Chauncey, that, if he should think fit to frequent a Port in Sicily with our Squadron; this Government would allow him to have a Depot there for its Use, as had formerly been done.—The Marquis replied that certainly the Squadron would have a perfectly hospitable reception in all the Ports of His Majesty, but that he doubted about the Depot. His Impression was that it had never been granted to any Nation, but he would enquire & let me know. He has since written to me to say Indisposition has prevented him from attending fully to this Matter, and that the Moment he is able he will take the King's orders upon it,* and apprize me of them.

On the 28th Instant, yesterday morning, I sent in my Note upon Murat's Confiscations. The necessity of making some previous Enquiries here, upon matters connected with them, had a little retarded the Completion of the Note; and, after it was ready, I concluded that I should lose nothing

* I had reminded him of it by a private Note.

by withholding it for a few Days, especially as the Marquis di Circello was incapable of attending to Business and had so informed me.

What will be the answer to the Note it is impossible to conjecture with any thing like Certainty.—It may be such as to make it necessary for me to reply to it; but the President may be assured that my further Stay in Naples shall be as short as I can make it.

I have the Honour to be—with the highest Consideration—Sir

Your Most Obedient Humble Servant

WM. PINKNEY [44]

PINKNEY TO JAMES MONROE

Private Naples 29th August 1816 [45]

My dear Sir

It is supposed here to be improbable that this Government will *at present* yield to our Demand about Murat's Spoliations; but it is impossible to ascertain with certainty upon what Grounds it will decline to pay. Those who undertake to conjecture differ among themselves. Extreme poverty will doubtless be one Ground, although not mentioned. The manner in which Murat applied the proceeds will I presume be another; and it is said that his dependent Situation with regard to France, and the fact (or rather as allegation) that he confiscated under the orders of Bonaparte, as that Bonaparte shared the Spoil, will be another. We shall see.—I am informed that the proceeds, as they came to the Hands of the Government, did not much exceed a Million of Dollars.—The *vessels* sold for very little and, although the Merchandize sold well, the fiscal System of the Country was then (as it is now) so corrupt in all its Branches that the Mass of the proceeds stopped *in transitu* and only an inconsiderable part got into the Treasury.—

You will perceive that my Note to the Marquis di Circello states that some of the Vessels are now in the possession and service of this Government. I think there are three. What they will do with *them* I know not; but it is imagined that they will offer to restore them or to make Compensation to the Extent of their Value which is considerable.—My note says very little about those Vessels for obvious reasons.

Although my mission produced as I am told *some* sensation here (and the Commodore's making the Bay of Naples a rendezvous for the Squadron preparatory to his going to Sicily, perhaps produced more.

I have been received with great Kindness and Distinction.[46] The

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[44] At the bottom of the page the following date is given: Aug[t] 24-16, which is different from the date that appears on the heading of the despatch.

[45] This despatch is not included among the documents published in *Message*. It was received by the State Department on Jan. 4, 1817.

[46] Records in the National Archives, Washington, D. C., indicate that during this period Mr. Pinkney attended several important social functions. On Aug. 25, 1816,

Commodore & the officers of the Squadron have also been received but those were no such Sensation.—I presented Commodore Chauncey and Commodore Perry [47] to the King, and they were as the Phrase is "graciously received."—The Captains would all have been presented if they had thought fit.—Mrs. Pinkney has been presented to the King—and we have had as much attention as it is possible to show us by Invitations to Balls galas &c.—Three Days ago Mrs. Pinkney & Myself had a formal audience of the Duke and Duchess del Genovese.—She is the King's Daughter & he is the Brother of the King of Sardinia. They were very courteous.—

You will discover that my note to the Marquis di Circello of the 24th Instant is in some Degree drawn up with reference to the sensation above mentioned—that is to say with great Care to avoid every thing like menace. —The subject of that Note is the most delicate & difficult that can be imagined. I found it quite a Task to write upon it in such a manner as to satisfy myself that I had gone far enough without going too far.—I hope that it will appear to the President to be a discreet Paper, and yet a firm and direct Exposition of our Case.—I have endeavoured to exhibit the Claim with all possible Strength, while I shunned whatever might produce Irritation or Ill Will.—I could only have made more of the Argument by making the Note ungracefully long.—A laborious view of the Subject would have been unsuited to a Note which merely introduced the Claim.— I think it a good Claim—and that it must finally succeed if it should even fail now. At any rate—our Citizens, who have been plundered, will be convinced by what is now doing that their Interests have not been neglected.—

As to the Commercial Subject, there is no Disposition here to make any arrangement with us.—The actual State of Things is too advantageous for them, and they have nothing to gain (according to their policy) by a Change. I will explain this hereafter.

We understand here that L[d] Exmouth [48] is expected in the Mediterranean

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Mr. and Mrs. Pinkney attended a royal ball held at His Majesty's Casino at Chiatamone. The following day, Aug. 26, 1816, the minister plenipotentiary of Sardinia informed Mr. and Mrs. Pinkney that the Duke and Duchess of the Genovese would receive them on Aug. 27th, at 11 a. m.

[47] Captain Oliver H. Perry (1785-1819). Born in Rhode Island. In 1816-1817, as Commander of the *Java*, Perry cruised the Mediterranean. *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 490.

[48] Edward Pellow first Viscount Exmouth (1757-1833). English Admiral. Early in 1816 he was ordered to visit the several North African powers to obtain the release of all British subjects. This was readily granted by Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. However, the dey of Algiers refused a request to abolish Christian slavery. Exmouth was then ordered to attack the Algerines. The fire continued for eight hours, and the batteries and a great part of the town was silenced. The next day Exmouth received a message granting all his demands, and this was finally confirmed on Aug. 29th. Some 3,000 slaves mostly Italians and Spaniards, were liberated and sent to their respective countries. Thereupon Exmouth returned home. See Edward Osler, *Life of 1st Viscount Exmouth* (1835); *Dictionary of National Biography*, XV (1921), 711-715.

to act at Algiers. There are not wanting persons who believe that our naval operations in these Seas are to be watched by His Lordship.—I suppose that to be idle speculation.—

My Mission has thus far been pleasant but it will be a severe Expence to me. The funds allowed will not be sufficient to take me to St. Petersburgh; and when I get there the actual Salary will fall short of the Expence of the plainest Living, as I have been informed by persons at Naples who have lived long in St. Petersburgh.[49]

I have the Honor to be my dear Sir

Your sincere Friend & obedient Servant

WM. PINKNEY

P. S. I believe the Depot in Sicily will not be granted—but that it will be *kindly* refused.

PINKNEY TO ROBERT OLIVER, OF BALTIMORE [50]

Naples. 7, September 1816

My dear Sir

I find that it will be necessary for me to avail myself, here and at St. Petersburgh, of a part of my pecuniary means in America. I understand that the best mode will probably be to draw on you; and I suppose that through Mr. Falconet I shall have recourse to that mode before I leave Naples, which I expect to do in a few Days, although my mission to this Government is not yet brought to a Close. The sum will not exceed $6000.

We have just heard of Ld. Exmouth's Success at Algiers. The news is certainly good in many respects; but it is not calculated to promote my purpose here.

I am happy to have it in my power to speak very advantageously of your Son. And, as to Mr. D'arcey, I feel very much indebted to you for being instrumental in making him of our party. He is one of the most estimable men I have ever known.

Will you have the goodness to assist William in sending my coach (if not sold) from Baltimore to St. Peterburgh in the Spring. Perhaps it wd. be well to add the Chisa [chaise?]. The promised wine of course will not be forgotten.

Your sincere Friend

WM. PINKNEY

Robt. Oliver Esq.

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[49] Theodore Lyman in his *Diplomacy of the United States* (Boston, 1826), p. 381, table 2, records from official documents that for his mission to the Two Sicilies Pinkney received $9,000 for his "outfit" and $1,995.23 for "contingent expenses," a total of $10,995.23. This, of course, was in addition to other sums paid to him for services rendered in connection with his mission to Great Britain (1806-11) and Russia (1816-1818).

[50] From the Oliver Collection, Maryland Historical Society. This letter was called

PINKNEY TO THE MARQUIS DI CIRCELLO

Naples. Septr. 30th 1816 [51]

The undersigned, Envoy Extraordinary of the United States of America, had the honour to receive last night the note of His Excellency the Marquis di Circello, bearing date of the 27th Instant, upon the Subject of the Note of the Undersigned of the 24th of August.—

The undersigned certainly regrets that the Government of His Sicilian Majesty has not been able already to honour him with a precise reply to that Note; and he regrets still more that, on account of the difficulty of collecting the Information supposed to be necessary to a correct Decision upon the claim which it preferred, he cannot hope to have such a reply during the Time to which he is obliged to limit his present Stay in Naples.

He is perfectly sure, however, that the Epoch is at Hand when His Majesty's Government will be possessed of this Information, and when the Justice of the Claim of the Government of the United States in behalf of its injured Citizens will be fully perceived and distinctly acknowledged.

The Undersigned, in answer to that part of the Note of The Marquis di Circello which proposes to send a Reply, to the Note of the Undersigned of the 24th of August, wheresoever the Undersigned may indicate, has the honour to state to the Marquis di Circello that, upon this point, as well as upon all such ulterior Steps as his mission and the Subject of it may be calculated to produce, the Undersigned will think it his Duty to refer himself to his Government, which at the same time that it will give their due weight to the reasons which are now assigned for a short postponement of the Claim in question, will take such measures as it shall think the Case requires with regard to the future.

The Undersigned takes this occasion to renew to H. E. the Marquis di Circello the assurance of his distinguished consideration.

WM. PINKNEY

PINKNEY TO JAMES MONROE

Naples, Saturday. Octr. 5th 1816 [52]

Sir:

On Sunday the 29th. of last month I had an Interview with the Marquis di Circello, in pursuance of the Intention announced in my last.—I pressed him for his promised answer to the note of the 24th of August, and insisted that if he could not reply to it immediately he would name the Time within which it was probable he could do so.—He said that an immediate answer was really impossible, and that he could not, without

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to the writer's attention through the kindness of Mrs. Laurence Hall Fowler, donor of the Oliver Collection.

[51] Not included among the documents published in *Message*.

[52] Extracts from this despatch were published in *Message*, 18-22.

running the risk of misleading me, fix the precise Time for the giving of such an answer as sh[d]. be categorical.—I asked the reason for this. He observed that the papers relative to the Vessels & Cargoes for which we now demanded an Equivalent had in Murat's time been scattered about in such a way that with all the Diligence they could use, they had not yet been able to collect them or such Information that might stand in their place; that all proper Steps had been taken by the King's Government for obtaining these papers and whatever else was connected with and material to our Claim, and that they hoped that they would soon be successful; that our Claim, apparently of large amount, was made upon those who confessedly had no participation in the transaction upon which it was founded; that it was therefore manifest they had all their Knowledge of those transactions to gain; that they were sincerely desirous of understanding them thoroughly; that, without all the knowledge of the Circumstances of the case which could at this Time and by due inquiry be recovered, the King could not decide whether he was or was not answerable to us as we alledged; that a Decision would undoubtedly be hastened and made known to me as soon as possible and as he believed within a period of time not any means distant; but that I must perceive it was not in his power, without practising Disingenuousness, to assure me that this could be done in a few weeks.—In some further Conversation on this point I told him that I feared I should be obliged to leave Naples before his answer was prepared; and as he knew that my ulteriour [sic] Destination was St. Petersburgh, I informed him finally that I had determined to set out for Russia on Saturday the 5[th]. instant, (this day) unless by waiting a week or two more I could be sure of adjusting the Business of my mission.—He replied with his characteristical good-breeding that they should be extremely sorry to lose me, and that they hoped to have me with them for some time but that, if my Duty elsewhere called me away he would undertake to send the Answer to my note the moment it could be given, wherever I would indicate; that there was no probability that if I left Naples as soon as I spoke of, or even a week or two later, I should receive the answer here, but that if it *could* be given so promptly it *should*.—I rejoined that I doubted if without Instructions it would be well for me to receive the answer, after I had left the King's Court & Territories; that I confidently trusted the answer would admit our Claim (although we had no desire to urge them inconveniently [sic] as to Time or mode of payment or even to push the demand to its utmost Extent) but that, however little such a Result was to be expected, the answer might contest our Demand, or an important portion of it, in which case it was both my Duty & my Inclination to reply to the answer, and to maintain, as I did not fear to be able to do, the Grounds of fact and Law upon which I had already relied; and that this could not be done with advantage, nor perhaps with propriety, unless with the approbation of my Government, after my Departure for another Station.—The Marquis immediately expressed an opinion that I might regularly receive the answer after I had left the Neapolitan Dominions; and, in consequence of a

question which I put to him in this Stage of the Conversation (whether it might not be more in Rule to offer to deliver the answer to whom and where the *Government of the United States* should think fit) he said that he should have no objection to any course which I preferred, but that he thought it would be best (*as being more respectful to me*) that he should undertake to send the answer as I should prescribe, especially as this Course essentially included the other. It would have been impossible for me to dispute an opinion referred to so civil a nature [sic] even if the matter had been worth disputing.—I do not think, however, that it was worth more words than had been bestowed upon it and I therefore left the Marquis to take his own way upon it, reserving to myself the Power of taking mine in due Season.

In the whole of this Conversation of which I have very shortly stated the Import not a Word was dropped by the Marquis condemning our Claim or intimating that it was likely to be rejected, although much that I said was calculated to provoke him to do so.—But again, he said nothing which amounted to an admission that the Claim would be acknowledged.

Before I went away I requested (and he promised) that he would write me a Note, expressing briefly what had passed between us; and in the Evening of the same day I received from him a Paper of which a Copy is among the Enclosures written and sent in consequence of that Request; but upon examining the papers I found that it referred to my unofficial letter mentioned in my last and not to our Interview, and moreover that it was dated the 27th. of September (perhaps a mistake for the 29th., or possibly my mistake of his figures) which was antecedent to the Interview. I took for granted, however, that the Marquis had understood me to wish that this mode should be adopted; and, as it was of no Importance, I did not put him, as at first I thought of doing, to the trouble of changing it.—I therefore founded upon it the three Notes (bearing Date, two of them, the 30th. of September, and the other 1st. of October) of which copies are enclosed.

On the 2d. Instant I received the Marquis's answer to my note of the 30th. of September which desired an audience of the King, and I took leave accordingly on Friday the 4th. Instant, one of the Days referred by the Marquis's Note to my Choice, as you will perceive by the Copy of it herewith transmitted. The King was polite and kind and conversed for some time with me on this occasion; but nothing was said by him which had any relation to the objects of my Mission.

Having received my Passports, my intention is to commence my Journey for S. Petersburg in a very few days. Mr. King left me for Russia about a fortnight ago, as my letters of the 18th. of September informed you he would and the Gentlemen attached to my Legation have gone before me to Rome where I hope to arrive on Thursday or Friday next.

I beg your attention, now, to a few words upon the Course which I have pursued as Envoy Extraordinary to Naples, and upon the actual position & prospects of the Claim which produced it.

My Stay here has perhaps been a little longer that was anticipated when I sailed from America; but upon a careful examination of my Instructions

appeared to me that I was directed by them to make the attempt to obtain an acknowledgement of our Claim upon this government as full & complete without sacrificing to it the Interests of my Mission to Russia.—I have done this. As the Claim was of great Magnitude in a pecuniary sense, involved important principles, and turned upon facts into which those with whom I had to deal had a Right to enquire, I could scarcely hope to bring it to an Issue of any kind within less than the two months which have elapsed since my first Reception.—With regard to my Mission to Russia I have yet made no Sacrifice. Independently of the explanations which I have had from Time to Time with Count Mocenigo [53] (the Russian minister here) with regard to my own anxiety (conforming with the orders of my Government) to be in S. Petersburg without delay, those who have Experiences of the Road assure me that, if I had started sooner I would have been obliged to wait upon the Route for the setting in of the Frost, and that I should therefore have gained nothing.—

On the other hand, certainly, I could have no apology for protracting my Stay in Naples beyond the Time to which I have limited it.—My instructions, which are precisely what they ought to be, would not justify it.—By remaining here a few weeks more I should postpone for several months perhaps my arrival in S. Petersburg by losing the best Season for quitting Italy.—

Of the manner in which my negotiation has been conducted I have little to say. Avoiding Extremes of every kind I have sought to write & speak with politeness, but at the same time explicitly & firmly. My object has been to let the King & his Ministers understand that the Claim *must* be settled, and to place it upon such ground as to convince them that we are in earnest in considering them as our Debtors.—Without being studiously consiliatory [sic] I have forborne all Menace. They have indeed treated me & my errand with so much Respect that it would have been difficult for me, even if it had been wise and honorable, to endeavor to force the Claim upon them by arrogance and Harshness.—

I might indeed have contrived to display a more active & zealous Importunity than my Letters will be found to describe; but it could only have been that teasing Importunity which, wanting Dignity and unauthorized by usage, has nothing to recommend its Introduction into transactions like this. No proper opportunity has, I think, been missed to urge this government to a favorable Decision.

As to the footing upon which the Claim now stands and the Value of its future prospects, it is obvious that much has been gained.—It has been presented (whether well or ill I dare not judge). It has been received in a becoming manner and entertained for Deliberation and Enquiry. The Way to adjustment [sic] has been prepared & smoothed. The great Principle on which the demand was rested by the Government of the United States is impliedly conceded, and at any rate has been greatly strengthened, by the forbearance of this Government, not only *in Linine*

[53] Giorgio Mocenigo, Count (1762-1839). Born in Zante. From 1790 to 1827 he was a Russian diplomat.

but even to the last moment of my mission, to deny it, with opportunity and every inducement to do so constantly presented to it.—It was to have been expected, and *was* expected, that the Court of Naples would resist at the Threshold a demand which, directly as well as implicitly asserted its responsibility for the violences and frauds of Murat.—It was its true Policy to repel such a demand at once (without reference to Details) if it meant to contest at all the responsibility, upon which the Claimant altogether depended, and which formed in Truth the only dubious part of their Case. It was prepared to take that Course (as I was *well assured*) upon my first arrival. Yet it has not ventured to take it.—On the contray, it has avowedly busied itself, since the presentation of my Note of the 24th of August, in Efforts (which cannot be successful) to lay a foundation of *fact* for Distinctions that may give it a chance of escaping from our principle, which finally it declines to question.—

The Reasons suggested by this Government for a short postponement of its Decision are such as I suppose I could not have quarrelled with, without putting myself in the wrong.—They are perfectly respectful to the United States and of real weight in themselves.—Their Effort is to leave negotiation open, to give Encouragement to resume it, and, at the same time that they impart new solidity to our Claim to render as acquiescence on our part in a brief ajournment [sic] of it, not only consistent with our Honour, but a Duty. In the meantime the two Governments are not brought to a disagreeable Issue as (if the Claim had been rejected without ceremony, or even with all the ostentation of civility) they might have been.

There is another light in which the matter may be considered. This government is the most corrupt in the world. An agent employed by the American claimants would now with reference to that consideration, have ground to stand upon. The claim has many a lodgement [sic] and has become respectable, and manageable and is in a state to receive that sort of aid.[54]

With all this to be sure the Government of the United States or its Minister has and can have nothing to do; but the claimants may be inclined to lay some stress upon it, and they are at liberty to manage their own affairs as they may; taking care only not to connect their Government.—

In not consenting to receive the answer of this Government after my Departure from Naples I was a good deal influenced by the apprehension that they might possibly give me such an Answer when absent as they would not give me if present.—I desired, moreover, to insure to my Government a just control over the subject, and to the Claimants a clear stage for their own private Exertions. I thought that a more convenient resting point could scarcely be had, and that it would be better that I should afford time to advise upon the Case to those who had more Right than I had to dispose of it in future than that adhering to my Mission after I had separated myself from those to whom I was accredited, I should

[54] In the original the entire paragraph beginning with "There is another light . . ." is also given in code which must have been so transmitted by Mr. Pinkney.

risk the loss of everything by the Exercise of a very doubtful Authority under all sorts of Disadvantages.—

I have not Time to add to this Letter some miscellaneous Remarks & Information which occur to me, and a part of which would require to be in Cypher. From Florence perhaps I shall be able to write again by such an opportunity as may enable me to dispense with the Caution that it is necessary to observe.—

I ought to add however, that upon the Commercial Subject I did not renew my conversation with the Marquis di Circello, because it was evidently not worth while—of that more hereafter.

I have the Honour to be with sincere Respect and consideration your faithful & obedient servant

WM. PINKNEY

PINKNEY TO JAMES MONROE

Naples. 9th. Octr. 1816.

Sir:

I believe I have omitted to mention that my letter to Commodore Chauncey (of which I enclosed you a copy in my Dispatch of the 24th. of last month) was sent to Messina, and that (the Squadron having sailed before it arrived there) it has come back to me.—In lieu of it I have enclosed to the Commodore a copy of the Marquis di Circello's communication to me of the 4th Instant, and of my answer of the 6th. I did not think it necessary, and indeed have not had time, to send him copies of the Documents transmitted in the Marquis's communication.—

Everything being now prepared for my Departure, I intend to begin my Journey tomorrow morning.[55]—In passing through Rome, Florence, Vienna, & Berlin it will probably be decorous in me to seek to be presented to the Pope, the Grand Duke, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia.[56] I shall carry hence the most advantageous Letters of Introduction to all these places.

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[55] When it became certain that Mr. Pinkney had failed to obtain the indemnity, the English who had evinced much apprehension felt greatly relieved. *Niles, Weekly Register* (XII, 138) declared as follows: "It is not true, and we are most happy it is not true that the Island of Lampedosa has been ceded to the Americans towards whom the government has behaved with great spirit. The former have in fact gained nothing from their mission to Naples. The Americans are certainly a rising people, but it is rather premature, we think, for them to begin the reaction of colonizing Europe." A Neapolitan newspaper, obviously writing under government dictation, was quoted as follows in *Register* (II, 307): "Mr. Pinkney has left. There is every reason to believe that all differences between the United States and our country are terminated. Our honor has received no stain, and it could receive none under a prince who is fully conscious of the dignity of his crown and the rank which his dynasty holds in Europe. Austria has shown upon the occasion that she was ready to support our just pretentions. (Perrotta, *op. cit.*, 37-38).

[56] The Pope was Pius VII, Barnaba Luigi Count Chiaramonti (1742-1823). He had been elected Pope in 1800; went into exile during the Napoleonic invasions

The Passports which I have found it is Rule to take from here are those of the Marquis di Circello, the Minister of Russia & the Minister of Austria.—They all describe me as the Minister of the United States at the Court of S^t. Petersburg.—The little misunderstanding about Kosloff's affair [57] does not appear to be known here, even to the Russian minister.

I have spoken in some of my letters to you of the Gentlemen *attached to my Legation*.—To prevent any misapprehension on that subject I ought perhaps to state that I have attached my son Charles [58] and three other Americans (who accompanied me in the Washington) to my Legation and have permitted them to wear the diplomatic uniform as private secretaries; but neither the Government nor myself has anything to do with their Expences, except so far as *Charles* is a part of my own Family.—These Gentlemen have added much to the Appearance and Respectability of my Mission, and I have had every Reason to be perfectly satisfied with them.

I have the Honour to be

With the highest Respect and consideration

Your faithful and Obedient Servant

WM. PINKNEY

PINKNEY TO JAMES MONROE

Modena. Nov. 3 1816.

Sir:

I left Naples on the 10^th. of last month, and have since got on as fast as I could to this place.—In the morning I shall resume my Journey to St. Petersburg by the way of Vienna.

At Rome I became acquainted with the Cardinal Gonsalvi [59] [sic] (The

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of Italy; and returned to Rome in May, 1814. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was Ferdinand III of Lorraine (1769-1824). Ferdinand III had come to the throne of Tuscany in 1790, but in 1801 he was dethroned by Napoleon I. He was restored as Grand Duke in 1814. The Emperor of Austria was Francis I (whose reign extended from 1806 to 1835) and the King of Prussia was Frederick William III, who ruled 1797-1840.

[57] Kosloff, the Russian Consul General in Philadelphia, had been arrested and tried by a civil court on a charge of rape. The Russian Emperor took the incident as a personal insult, refusing to discuss the incident with John Levitt Harris, the United States Consul at St. Petersburg. This incident made Mr. Pinkney anxious to leave for Russia at once, since it became known that Mr. Pinkney was acceptable to the Emperor and therefore in a position to discuss the matter with him amicably.

[58] Charles Pinkney superseded William R. King, of Alabama, as secretary of the Legation in Russia on Nov. 30, 1818. He acted as chargé d'affaires *ad interim* from Feb. 14, to Sept. 22, 1818, and from July 5, to Nov. 9, 1820. *Register of the Department of State*, corrected to Mar. 1, 1874. (Washington: Gov't. Printing Office, 1874).

[59] Consalvi, Ercole (1757-1824), Cardinal Secretary of State (1800-23). Shrewd and energetic. In 1801 he concluded a Concordat with France. In 1816 he caused the approval and publication of "motu proprio organico" signalizing the triumph of ideas of tolerance. He was dismissed by Leo XII.

Secretary of State and a very able man) who showed me all sorts of Kindness, and through him I had a long and very satisfactory private audience of the Pope at the Castello Gondolfo, in the neighbourhood of Albano, a few miles from Rome.

The Pope is an extremely interesting man from every view, and loses nothing by being approached.—His manner, which is very engaging, has the recommendation of announcing the goodness of his Heart.—As he talked to me in Italian (which I understand imperfectly when it is spoken, although I read it pretty well) and I talked to him altogether in French (which he understands about as well as I do Italian) I derived less Reassurance from his conversation than in itself it was calculated to give.—It gave me great Pleasure nevertheless.—

No Person was permitted to be present at this Audience.—The "Monsignor" who conducted me into the Pope's Closet retired immediately, closing the Door, and passing through the anteroom (the door of which also he shut) into a large Hall where the Pope's attendants were in waiting and the Gentlemen who accompanied me remarked on my way to the Closet I was desired to leave my hat upon a Chair in the anteroom. As soon as I was introduced the Pope offered me his hand, which according to established usage I kissed.—Our conversation turned principally upon the political & moral State of the World, upon the climate &c of Italy, and upon Rome antient and modern.—He spoke pleasingly and well upon all these Subjects, mixing up now and then a little French, for my benefit, with Italian.—When talking of our Country he did not omit to make me perceive that he was acquainted with its worth and that he held it in the highest respect.—We were seated during the whole of our Conversation.—When I was about to retire he invited me to stay to Dinner, and upon my excusing myself he took me by the hand (after having first offered me his to kiss as upon my Entrance) and conducted me out of the Closet to the Door of the Antechamber which he opened.—The gentlemen who accompanied me were then introduced to him, in the antechamber (as is customary) after which we left him. The Monsignors (I think they are so called) of his Court were extremely civil, and urged me very strongly to dine at the Castello: but as I knew that the Pope would not be at the table (he always dines alone) I declined the Invitation, and returned to Rome.

I left Rome as soon as was in my power (having however first taken a rapid view, under the auspices of the Cardinal Secretary of State, of everything in it which is worth seeing) and arrived at Florence on the 25th. of last month.—One of my carriages had suffered in our Journey from Rome, and was found to require Alteration as well as Repair. This detained me at Florence until the 31st. when I set out for Bologna where I stayed only a single night.—

I have a letter from Mr. King (dated at Vienna October 16th.) in which he tells me that the Passport of the Russian Government and a letter from Mr. Harris, containing nothing new, wait for me at Vienna.—Mr. King went on to St. Petersburg.—It appears from the newspapers that an

American Corvette passed the 23d. of September with a messenger for St. Petersburg.—I take for granted that this is connected with Kosloff's affair, and of course that there is an End of all Difficulty on that subject.—I shall consequently pass on to my destination as rapidly as Roads, weather &c. permit. A few weeks will I trust find me there.—

I have the Honour to be

with the highest Consideration & Respect

Your most obedient Humble Servant

WM. PINKNEY

P. S. I hope you will receive in due season my last letters from Naples intrusted to the care of our Consul there.—It is impossible to make copies of them on the Road.

W. P.

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